

Horseman clinches first win since October 24

Only 223 watch this uninspiring encounter

Maidstone United 1, Wycombe Wanderers 2

WYCOMBE WANDERERS broke their lean Isthmian League spell — they had been without a win since October 24 — with a far from convincing victory over bottom-of-the-table Maidstone on Saturday.

Both sides failed to produce any attractive and flowing football in front of a crowd of only 223. What little constructive football did materialise came from Wycombe, but even so, it took a Tony Horseman penalty to make the game safe.

At times Maidstone's defence—which has conceded over 100 goals in all competitions this season—was so abysmal that it had to be seen to be believed.

Les Merrick was brought back into the Wanderers side, after being axed, replacing Samuels who had a slight leg strain. Peter Davies, a former Woking player, took over the right-wing spot from Worley, and after a promising first half faded in the second period.

Maidstone, who started the match with only ten men—centre-forward Craig was late in arriving—were soon on the defensive as Busby nodded a Baker pass over the top.

A minute after the missing Craig took the field, Wycombe went into the lead. Busby headed down a cross for Holmes to hook a bouncing ball into the top left hand corner, in the 14th minute.

NO GENERAL

What Wycombe sadly lacked was a general who could dictate the pattern of play. However, no one could take on this role and as a result, Wanderers often resorted to Maidstone's tactics of giving the ball a 'hefty boot' downfield.

In the 40th minute Maidstone surprisingly equalised with a goal right out of the blue. Fondyke slipped a cross over and Taylor crashed home a scorching 25-yard drive. The Maidstone players were elated with Taylor's success, who was probably the most surprised man on the field that his shot had beaten Maskell!

Almost on half-time right-back Stollery pushed a Holmes header off the line. Horseman stepped up to take the spot-kick and made no mistake.

Wanderers looked well in command in the second half but could not turn their superiority into goals. No doubt the forwards were hindered by the inadequate floodlights, as play progressed in a murky gloom. Maidstone, in fact, were the first amateur club in the country to have a floodlighting system which was installed in 1953 and very little alteration has been made since then!

However, that does not completely exonerate the Wycombe finishing which became casual. Merrick hit the bar with a header, Horseman saw his soft shot kicked off the line and rattled the bar with another header.

Davies, who wears contact lenses, had one glorious opportunity of scoring on his senior debut, when from a few yards out, he calmly stroked the ball straight at the 'keeper.

All in all, hardly an inspiring performance, but as manager-coach, Barry Darvill, so aptly summed up, "We came to get two points and that is what we achieved"—one can add little more.

Wycombe: J. Maskell; I. Rundle, B. Vousden; B. Baker, V. Faulkner, C. Gale; P. Davies, L. Merrick, V. Busby, A. Horseman, S. Holmes.

Maidstone 1 Wycombe 2

THIS DEFEAT by only one goal was Maidstone's best result for weeks. They were never far from grabbing an Isthmian League point. Wycombe, sparked by the most dangerous attacker on view in Tony Horseman, almost had cause to regret careless finishing.

Wycombe went ahead through winger Holmes in the 14th minute, when Maidstone were still without late-arrival Craig. A great goal by Taylor five minutes from the interval shook the visitors, but they soon made it 2-1 with a Horseman penalty.